The Cheerful Letter

EVERY PLACE A CHURCH; EVERY DAY THE LORD'S DAY; ALL EVENTS BLESSINGS; ALL JOY THANKSGIVING; AND ALL NATURE AND LIFE FULL OF GOD.—*James Freeman Clarke.*

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THE CHEERFUL LETTER.

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A PARABLE FOR HAPPY HEARTS.

On the earth a Flower grew,
From the Sun its being drew.
Day by day this royal friend
Sent down blessings without end.
Day by day the Flower held up
To be filled with light its cup;
And the great Sun ne'er forgot
In the universe this dot.

And the Sun said to the ground:
"Take my light, and bear it round,
Till my Flower's searching root
Find my blessing under foot."
And he said unto the air:
"Wrap my Flower in tender care,
Whisper to its very heart
That my loving breath thou art."

So the Flower, with gifts bowed down,
Humbled toward the earth its crown:
"Tell me, Sun, for so much treasure
Showered upon me without measure
Can I give thee nothing back?
Or, if thou dost nothing lack,
Can I pass these gifts divine
Unto lives less blest than mine?"

But the Sun said: "Nay, not so
Shall thy heart thanksgiving show.
Rather make thou full employ
Of thy privilege and joy,
For the best that thou canst *be*
Is the service asked of thee."

Then the Flower uprose once more,
Stronger-hearted than before,—
Through its seeming useless days
Tried to join earth's hymn of praise
With its given power of bloom,
Grace, and color and perfume.

But what joys passed unenjoyed,
What powers only half employed,
Gifts not to the utmost used,
Grace not in its life transfused.
What of all its mighty debt
To the Sun the Flower owed yet,
When its happy life was done,
No one knew but Flower and Sun.

—*Harriet Ware Hall.*

THE FAITH THAT OVERCOMES THE WORLD.

Faith is concerned with life, with spiritual realities, with hunger and thirst for righteousness, with aspiration and effort after all purity and goodness, growing out of trust in the moral inspirer of our conscience, animated and upheld by the models of true life, the life that cannot perish, in those children of our Father who, touched by our infirmities, tempted as we are, have reached toward the stature of perfect man. Belief is concerned with intellectual apprehensions, with the mind's opinions, inferences, or perceptions of truth, abstract or experimental. We believe in God when we infer a first cause. We have faith in God when we know that we are never alone, that we are "haunted forever by the eternal mind," by the Spirit who cannot separate himself from his children, "partakers of the divine nature," made in his image, and by him forever called to grow therein. "Can a woman forget her child?" The symbol is too weak: she is not the source of life,

author and giver of good. "Yea, she may forget; yet will not I forget." And God teaches and invites by sample. He nourishes and encourages faith in the life he prompts by the power and grace of a Son of man who had faith in the spirit of his Father, in whom light became life. The movement of God's spirit in every soul of man now reveals, in Christ, to what, to whom it points. Scepticism cannot chill it by uttering the mocking words, Unreal, unreal. In "the captain and perfecter of faith" we have "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen"; "the desire of our eyes" set before us; the things that are counted weak overcoming what the world deems strong; meekness, purity, the love for God and man, the soul's eternal life, reducing to nothing all other distinctions; the servant of all, the master of all, in his most commanding attitude when stooping to wash men's feet, serving, living, and dying for his brethren because they were the children of his Father; and, whilst seeking not his own, raised, with acknowledged authority, to the place of highest greatness, as the most perfect type of life which heaven permits to earth.

And now how are we to strengthen that faith through which the world is overcome? By becoming children of God ourselves, through observing and honoring the inspirations of our Father. The promptings of faith it is not ours to originate: that is God's work in us; it is ours to keep, cherish, and obey them. We can quench his spirit in us, by not listening for it, by disregarding and dishonoring it. God gives to every man as much of the suggestions of holiness, love, and faith as he will receive; but the Holy Spirit respects the reserve which is everywhere the law of spiritual intercourse. God offers himself, but does not force himself on a reluctant soul. He could not do it without superseding faith itself, without extinguishing our spiritual life with all that is free and filial in trust and love. Therefore, we can turn from him if we will, and let faith perish because its promptings are dishonored. Like all living powers, it is strengthened by its own acts, by works of faith adequate to express it, by prayers of faith breathed out of the life which God quickens, and reaching toward the life which Christ fulfilled, by meditations of faith, keeping its realities near the springs of our being, "musing till the fire burns." No man can expect that the Holy Spirit will continue to be imaged in the mirror of a nature that is turned away from him, that is clouded with impurity, disordered or convulsed with unworthy passions. Every impulse from God that leads to nothing retires, or, if it remains, remains only as a sting. If we had kept the primal harmony of being which Christ characterized as the image of the kingdom of God in the unspoiled instincts of our childhood; if daily obedience as the sphere of life gently opened had kept clear the fountain of living water, and the spiritual ear attentive to his whisper in us,— to what energy of faith and purity of discernment and continual delight in action might we not have reached as by the stages of a natural growth! And to one who would become God's child again the way is always open. We have but to look into his face to know that we had been walking in our own shadows, that we had turned away from him, not he from us. He who takes it for his essential life to work out what God works in him will fill his soul, and the world of opportunities, with the presence of the Holy One. He who, for righteousness' sake, overcomes whatever is lower, in obedience to his Father's spirit, will come to know what it is to have Christ formed within him, dwelling in his heart by faith. And he who loves his earthly friends and all his earthly fellowships for the sake of what is sacred in him and them will never, in any shadows of the valley of sin and death, lose sight of the fulfilment of the promises as sure as God is true, nor feel himself far from the family in heaven, the household of our Father, the unwaning lights in the city of the Eternal King.

—*John Hamilton Thom.*

THE STILL HOUR.

TOO LATE.

What silences we keep, year after year,
With those who are most near to us and dear!
We live beside each other day by day,
And speak of myriad things, but seldom say
The full, sweet word that lies just in our reach
Beneath the commonplace of common speech.

Then out of sight and out of reach they go,—
These close, familiar friends who loved us so;
And, sitting in the shadow they have left,
Alone with loneliness and sore bereft,
We think with vain regret of some fond word
That once we might have said and they have heard.

For weak and poor the love that we express
Now seems beside the vast, sweet unexpressed,
And slight the deeds we did to those undone,
And small the service spent to treasures won,
And undeserved the praise for word and deed
That should have overflowed the simple need.

This is the cruel cross of life,— to be
Full-visioned only when the ministry
Of death has been fulfilled, and in the place
Of some dear presence is but empty space.
What recollected service e'er can then
Give consolation for the might have been?

—*Nora Perry.*

We ought not to expend all our keen-sightedness in discovering our neighbor's little faults. By some strange perverseness in human nature we have far keener eyes for flaws and blemishes in others than for the lovely things that are in them. Not many of us go about talking to every one we meet about our neighbor's good points and praising lovely things in him. Not a few of us, however, can tell of an indefinite number of faults in many of our neighbors. Would it not be well to change this, and begin gossiping about the good and beautiful things in others?—*J. R. Miller.*

Canon Carus once said to a young clergyman: "I want you to remember four words as keynotes of your ministry,— charity, humility, integrity, purity." Ought not these four qualities to be present in the work of every Sunday-school teacher? The teacher of a class of boys or girls, young men or young women, needs quite as much as a preacher or a pastor to be charitable, ready to make allowances for others, entirely free from conceit or pride, strictly upright, and stainlessly pure in thought and speech, as well as in conduct. This striking counsel of an eminent Christian worker near the close of a long and exceptionally useful career may well be borne in constant remembrance by many who never heard his voice, and who occupy less prominent, but in a very real sense not less responsible, positions in Christian service.—*S. S. Chronicle.*

THE BIBLE CLASS.

Acts XI. Peter's Liberality Blamed. His Defence. The Missionary Work of the Persecuted Christians. The Foresight of a Famine by Agabus. The Church at Antioch sends Relief to Jerusalem.

The Jewish Christians at Jerusalem had heard of the visit of Peter to Cornelius before Peter returned to Jerusalem to explain his conduct. They were naturally very much shocked, for they retained the Jewish customs, and for that reason, probably, were not persecuted (as were the Hellenist Christians, represented by such men as Stephen and Philip.) So, when Peter arrived, they reproved him. "They of the circumcision" contrasted with the uncircumcised Gentiles, the new converts at Cæsarea. This looks as if the Hellenist Jews were circumcised as much as the born Jews.

Peter defended himself by narrating his dream, and telling of the opportune visit of the messengers of Cornelius, and especially how the Holy Ghost fell upon the Gentile converts, as it had done on the Jewish Christians at the day of Pentecost. This was a sign that the Gentiles were accepted by God as the Jewish Christians had been. This convincing proof seems to have satisfied the critics of Peter.

Meantime the persecuted Christians, who had fled from Jerusalem, were occupying themselves with missionary work. They had gone to Cyprus and to Phœnicia and to Antioch. Cyprus, an island in the eastern part of the Mediterranean, still bears the same name. Antioch is the capital city of Syria, and was named by Seleucus Nicator, the first king of Syria, after his father Antiochus. Seleucus was one of the generals of Alexander the Great.

"Preaching the word to none, but unto the Jews only." Probably "Jews" here means, or at least includes, the Hellenist Jews, in contradistinction to the Gentiles, such as Cornelius.

But now the story goes on to say, "And some of them were men of Cyprus and

Cyrene, which, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Greeks [not "Grecians," as in the old version], preaching the Lord Jesus." That is, these more liberal-minded Hellenists preached to the Gentiles proper, as well as to the Grecian Jews. And they made a great many converts to Christianity.

The Jerusalem Christians, when they heard this good news, thought best to send out a special missionary, and selected Barnabas for this purpose. Barnabas, having found things hopeful at Antioch, went to Tarsus after Paul, and brought Paul back with him. Evidently, Barnabas thought Antioch the proper place for Paul's missionary talents.

Barnabas and Paul remained a whole year at Antioch, and founded a strong church. At this time the followers of Jesus received the name "Christians," perhaps used at first as a term of reproach.

Although there are not many events in this chapter, it is an interesting picture of the beginning of the Christian Church among the Gentiles. In fact, it was very important that the Church should take root outside of Judea. Had it stayed among the Jews of Judea only, it would have perhaps remained a mere Jewish sect, and might have been crushed entirely at the time of the Roman conquest.

The little story of Agabus, and the famine foretold by him, gives us a chance to approximately fix the date of this period. The famine in the reign of Claudius, which especially affected Judea, was in the year 45 A.D. Any sensible, clear-sighted person *may* foretell a famine (though not always) by observing the conditions which lead to famine. There is nothing miraculous about this circumstance.

It is a pleasant little picture, also, which is given of the disciples at Antioch sending relief to the suffering members of the church at Jerusalem during the famine.

Antioch was now one of the chief centres of the Christian Church. Perhaps the Nicolas mentioned in Acts vi. 5, as a native of Antioch and a colleague of Stephen, may have had a share in founding the new branch.

Antioch was a very important place. It was the headquarters of the Roman governor of Syria. It had many Jewish inhabitants; and Herod the Great had built there a marble colonnade, which extended the whole length of the city. Among the inhabitants were men of distinction in letters,— poets and rhetoricians. The new religion was thus brought into contact with foreign culture and intelligence. Nevertheless, some of the more degrading forms of heathenism still prevailed. The new faith had great opportunities at Antioch to try its power, both against the worst type of old idolatries and on those men of intellect and culture who had grown beyond the old superstitions, and had not yet acquired a pure religion to take their place.

L. F. C.

THE BOOK AND MAGAZINE CLUB.

[*Send all matter for this department to Mrs. W. B. Nichols, 2 Kensington Park, Roxbury, Mass.*]

OFFERS.

Will any mother who would like to have "Gentle Measures in Training the Young," by Jacob Abbott, or any one who would like "Black Beauty," address Miss Langmaid, 2 Gordon Terrace, Brookline, Mass.?

The following are offered by the Cambridge branch. Address Mrs. C. W. Kettell, 19 Brewster Street, Cambridge, Mass.

Educational.

"French History for Children"; Sargent's "Standard Speaker"; Chauvenet's "Geometry"; Davies's Legendre; "Homeric Dictionary"; "Natural Philosophy," Peck's Ganot; "How Plants grow," Gray; Lockyer's "Elements of Astronomy"; Comer's "Penmanship"; Long's "Classical Atlas"; Harper's "School Geography," 1880; Cornell's "Atlas," 1880; "Readings from English History"; "The New Chemistry," J. P. Cooke; "Practical Lessons in the use of English"; "Elements of Natural Philosophy"; Cooley's "Natural Philosophy"; Eggleston's "First Book in American History"; Higginson's "Young Folks' History of the United States."

Miscellaneous.

"Selections from Macaulay"; "The Industrial Revolution in England"; "Sound Bodies for our Boys and Girls"; Bulfinch's "Age of Fable"; Plutarch's "Lives of Illustrious Men"; Lowell's and Longfellow's

"Poems"; Pope's "Essay on Criticism"; "Domestic Problems," A. M. Diaz; "The Alhambra," Irving; "Evening of Life"; Martin's "Civil Government"; "Jacqueminot."

German.

Worman's First German Book; "Kleine Erzählungen"; "Der Zerbrochene Krug"; "Höher als die Kirche"; "Deutsche Novellenschatz"; Gerstäcker's "Germelshausen"; "Hundert Kurze Erzählungen"; Archenholtz's "Geschichte"; "Graded German Lessons"; "Die Eisjungfrau und andere Geschichten"; "Es war einmal" (fairy tales); "Kinderbüchlein"; "Die Nonne," Baumbach; Worman's "Elementary German Grammar"; "Der Fluch der Schönheit"; Heine, "Die Harzreise"; "German Poetry for Repetition"; Schiller, "Gedichte," "Maria Stuart," "Wilhelm Tell," "Jungfrau von Orleans," "Wallenstein's Lager," "Die Piccolomini," "Wallenstein's Tod"; Goethe, "Italienische Reise," "Götz von Berlichingen," "Clavigo," "Stella," "Die Geschwister," "Egmont," "Iphigenie," "Torquato Tasso"; Lessing, "Minna von Barnhelm," "Im Zweilicht," "Die Erlkönigin," "Unter dem Christbaum."

The Brighton Branch offer the following. Address Miss Carrie L. Murdock, Brighton, Mass.

Hillard's "Sixth and First Class Readers"; Harper's "First Reader"; Franklin's "Primer and Second, Third, and Fourth Readers"; "Arithmetic and its Application," Colburn; "Arithmetic for Schools," Lock and Scott; Wentworth and Hill's "Arithmetic"; Franklin's "Written Arithmetic;" "Course of Composition and Rhetoric," Quackenbos; Greenleaf's "Elementary Algebra"; Worcester's "Spelling Book"; Mitchell's "Geographical Question Book"; "First Book in Physiology"; Allen's "Classical Handbook"; Goodrich's "Pictorial History of Greece"; Kiddle's "Elementary Astronomy"; "Physiology and Hygiene," Huxley and Youmans; "Compendium of American Literature"; "English Literature of the Nineteenth Century"; "Shaksperian Reader," Hows; "American Popular Speaker," Sypher; "The Sunny Side" (Sunday-school song book); the *Strand Magazine*, 1898–99; the *Wide World Magazine*, 1899 (6 months); current numbers of *Munsey*, 1900.

The following books are offered by the Portsmouth branch. Address Miss S. J. Wentworth, Portsmouth, N. H.

Educational.

Greenleaf's "Arithmetic"; Emerson's "Arithmetic"; Whately's "Elements of Logic"; Vose's "Astronomy"; Thompson's Legendre; Andrews's "Sallust"; Gray's "Natural Philosophy"; Goodrich's "Greek Grammar"; Colburn's "Algebra"; Rowan's "Modern French Reader"; "American First Class Book"; Parker's "Philosophy"; Manesca's "French Grammar"; Levizac's "French Grammar"; Noël's "French Grammar"; Krebs's "Guide for Writing Latin"; Anthon's "Cicero"; Le Brun's "Télémaque"; Comstock's "Chemistry"; Smelley's "Philosophy"; Smith's "Astronomy"; "Chemical Catechism"; Andrews's "Latin Exercises"; Putnam's "Sequel to the Analytical Reader"; Blair's "Philosophy"; Day's "Algebra and Key"; Colburn's "Arithmetic"; "Viri Romae"; Ladreyt's "Models of French Conversation"; "Chrestomathie de Littérature Française"; Moore's "Virgil"; "French Grammar."

Fiction.

"Paul Clifford"; "Rosamond, Harry, and Lucy"; "Rudder Grange"; "Tales of Ellen"; "Ruth Lee"; "Dream Life"; "Pearl"; "Can you Forgive her?" Trollope; "The Little School-teacher's Mark"; "Lorna Doone"; "Lady of the Aroostook"; "Twenty Thousand Leagues under the Sea"; "Robert Elsmere"; "The Caxtons"; "From the Forecastle to the Cabin"; "The Fair God"; "Vice Versa"; "Afloat and Ashore"; "Two Admirals"; "Last of the Mohicans"; "Pathfinder"; "Zanoni"; "Arabian Nights"; "Deerslayer"; "Headsman"; "Benedictines"; "Bravo"; "Wept of Wish-ton-Wish"; "Prairie"; "Lionel Lincoln"; "Pioneer"; "Spy"; "Monikins"; "Godolphin"; "Persuasion"; "Afloat and Ashore."

Miscellaneous.

"An Old Town by the Sea"; "Uncle Remus: his Songs and Sayings"; "Jonathan and his Continent"; "Talks with Ralph Waldo Emerson"; "Everybody's Fairy Godmother"; "Let us Follow him"; "Parent's

Assistant"; "Line upon Line"; "The Soul's Cry and the Lord's Answer"; "Life and Character of Sylvester Judd"; "Problems of Modern Democracy"; "Bacteria and their Products"; "Public Health Problems"; "Burney on Music"; "Home for All"; Life of George Washington (in French); "Stories on the Shorter Catechism"; "Questions on Saint Paul's Epistle"; "Fables de la Fontaine" (French); Peabody's "Hymn and Tune Book"; "Best Hours"; "Christmas Hours"; "Columbia's Emblem"; "The Christian Life"; "Memoir of a Brother" (Thomas Hughes); "Sermons to Children" (Greenwood); "Notes on the Gospel of Matthew"; "Christian Believing and Living"; "Lettres de Eugénie de Guérin"; "The Garden" (Parley); "Religious Souvenir."

The following books are offered by the Second Church Branch Women's Alliance, Salem, Mass. First requests must contain a reference. Address Miss Decker, 4 Mt. Vermon Street, Salem, Mass.

"The Story of the Volsungs"; "Cycling for Health"; "Life of Washington Irving"; "Memoir of Dr. Robert Chalmers"; "The Rose-bud"; "Poetical Works of Robert Bloomfield and Henry Kirke White"; "Hymns for Church and Home," Rev. James Flint; "The Best Things"; "Sermons for Children," Richard Newton, D.D.; "Beside the Bonnie Briar Bush," Ian Maclaren; "The Greatest Thing in the World," Drummond; Hayward's *New England Gazetteer*, 1839; "The Queen's Cup," Henty; The Gospel Writ in Steel," Paterson; "Concerning Isabel Carnaby," Fowler; "Madam Izan," Campbell-Praed; "David Copperfield," Dickens; *How to Grow Flowers*, September, 1899, through March, 1900; bound volume *Peterson*, 1864.

REQUESTS.

[*Read directions at beginning of Book Club before writing.*]

Those who send offers and requests for the Book Club will do us a kindness by noting the following suggestions: 1. Please write very clearly. 2. Do not use a pencil. 3. Do not use contractions, especially names of States (as Cal. and Col. for California, Colorado). 4. Write on one side only of the paper. 5. Do not forget to give your full address. (The State is now and then omitted.) 6. Do not send matter for the Book Club to Miss Clarke, but to Mrs. Nichols, the Book Club secretary.

Those who write to us for the first time must send the name and address of a minister as a reference. Without that the request will not be printed.

I am very fond of reading, and would thank you for anything you could send me. I am so lonely. My husband has been dead for a good many years. I have two sons and one daughter, who was married last October; and it makes my home more lonesome, as my sunshine has left me. Address Mrs. B. M. Wood, Thorn Hill, Orange County, Virginia.

Mrs. P. B. Rucker, Forks of Buffalo, Virginia, asks that instructive reading be sent her ten-year-old daughter Vivian.

Mrs. Kate Garten, Compton, Oklahoma, would be very glad to receive a Bible.

Miss Cynthia Owen, Athens, Texas, a young teacher, expresses her gratitude for what she has received, and asks especially for standard poems, and histories pertaining to antiquity.

Mrs. L. Burdick, Packwaukee, Wisconsin, is anxious for an English reader, such as was used seventy-five years ago, also Bible Dictionary.

I have been a constant reader of *The Cheerful Letter* for over four years, and have been greatly benefited by it and reading that has been sent me by its members. But I beg again. I want some kind of novels. I get magazines, but it has been a long time since I have received a long story. I am very thankful for what is being sent. I would like some little books sent my sisters, Pearl and Ruby Dunbar, aged thirteen and eleven years, at Mallard, Texas. They are both very lonely with our father, who is getting old. Mrs. Hattie D. Wood, Sulphur Springs, Indian Territory.

I am a little girl thirteen years of age. My mamma receives *The Cheerful Letter*. We live out in the country with poor advantages; and I would be glad to get reading, pretty books, pictures, cards, or anything suitable for me. Bertha Holloway, Pine Grove, Henderson County, Texas.

Mrs. J. B. Kline, 1618 West Sixth Avenue, Topeka, Kansas, asks for Gray's "Anatomy" for a deserving medical student.

Mrs. C. H. Bennett, MacDonald's Hill, Montgomery County, Virginia, would like to receive "Little Women" and "Old-fashioned Girl," by Louisa Alcott.

I am just married, and am a young farmer's wife. We live in a very remote place, no near neighbors; and I find many lonely hours when my husband is off at work. Any reading to while away the lonely hours will be gratefully received. Mrs. Kate E. Dunlap, Gideon, North Carolina.

Mrs. Mattie Rushing, Polkton, North Carolina, asks for letters and reading to cheer her in her lonely hours..

Miss Lizzie T. Reynolds, Lahore, Virginia, would be glad of reading. She lives at home with her aged parents, and feels the need of outside help to brighten the hours.

Miss A. A. Peatross, Jute, Stokes County, North Carolina, asks for "In His Steps" and current numbers of *Ladies' Home Journal.*

Mrs. B. A. Wentworth, Stark, New Hamphire, would be glad of current numbers of *Outlook.*

Any of the following will be gladly received by Mrs. C. E. Jenks, 220 Clarendon Street, Boston, for one of her correspondents who lost everything by fire, and who is very desirous of replacing some of her books: "Shakespeare's England," Winter; Scott's novels (paper bound); "Little Women"; "A Summer in Leslie Goldthwaite's Life," "Sights and Insights," Mrs. Whitney; "Familiar Quotations"; "Sesame and Lilies"; "Greek Heroes," Kingsley; "Biglow Papers"; "Vision of Sir Launfal"; "Treasure Island"; "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland"; "Through the Looking-glass"; any of Hawthorne's books; any of George Eliot's; "Children of the Abbey"; "Won by Waiting"; "The Heir of Redclyffe"; "Childe Harold," Byron; "History of England"; "History of France"; "Book of Mythology"; Maury's "Geography"; "German Dictionary"; "Grammar"; "Reader"; "Lucile"; "Bitter-sweet"; "Pilgrim's Progress"; "Undine"; "Marmion"; "Idyls of the King"; "Tent on the Beach"; Longfellow's "Poems"; Gray's "Botany"; Chapman's "Botany"; "How Plants grow," Gray; "Origin of Species," Darwin; "Scottish Chiefs"; "John Halifax, Gentleman"; "Evangeline"; "How to know the Wild Flowers"; "Technique of Rest"; Allen and Greenough's "Latin Grammar"; "Latin Dictionary"; "Days with Sir Roger De Coverley." Any book on kindergarten, sloyd, clay-modelling, nursing. Any book of Dialogues or Monologues.

Mr. W. L. Knight, Pearch, Bedford County, Virginia, who is delicate, and closely confined with his aged mother, who is an invalid, asks for "The Christian," "St. Ives," "Sign of the Four," "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde," or any American or English magazine.

Daisy Huntley, Wadesboro, North Carolina, asks for "Red Rock."

THE MOTHERS' COUNCIL.

[*Contributions to this department may be sent to Mrs. J. S. Howe, Brookline, Mass.*]

Visiting, not long since, in a prosperous home, not unlike hundreds of others in our country, I noticed an unusual willingness in its inmates, six of whom were children, to meet the various demands on their time or pleasure. There was such an entire absence of fault-finding and criticism, even in the little ones, as to arouse my curiosity, and determine me to find the method of my host and hostess which gave such pleasant results in their home-making. There were very few orders given; and even suggestions as to work were rare, except a frequent query, sometimes to one child and again to another, of "How is Betsy doing this morning?" or "Are you looking well after Betsy to-day?" Supposing Betsy some ailing animal or at most some poor neighbor or dependant, I gave her no thought; and my visit was nearly finished without my having found the mainspring that controlled the delicate machinery of the happiest home I ever entered. But one evening Ralph, the eldest son, came from school with his brown eyes flashing and his fine face in a quiver as he described some indignity to which he had been unjustly subjected. As he told his story, his mother's face flushed;

and I knew her heart answered to her boy's heart in this his hour of trial. But in a moment the flush went out, and only a little tremble of the voice showed how she had been moved, as she said: —

"Yes, dear, I know it is hard, very hard; but you must only look after Betsy, and trust God to do the rest. I will come to you soon in your room if you wish it."

Ralph took from her lips a tender kiss as he left us; and I exclaimed, "Anna, you must pardon me if I am too inquisitive; but who is this Betsy who has to be so much looked after, and has to absorb the care of all the children, whatever their own needs may be?"

"Why, Ellen, is it possible you have been with us so long, and not found out about Betsy?" answered my friend. "It seems strange, but I will gladly tell you. You surely remember Auntie Bacon, of whom we girls used to have such wholesome fear, because she always reproved us for any impropriety or undue levity in meeting, singing school, or sewing society. Well, if Auntie Bacon was something of a terror to other people, she was much more feared among the family relatives; for, though she would generously serve us early and late, and nurse us when we were ill, as only such an active woman could, we knew we never could attain to her standards of what we ought to be and do. You can imagine it was with no slight dread I anticipated meeting her in my position of mother of two restless boys when, after my marriage, I made my first visit home. But my dread was all unnecessary, for the dear woman had become the most overlooking and allowance-making person I ever knew. Every time I met her during that long summer my surprise increased; and the day before I was to come away I deliberately went to her, and asked her how the change had been accomplished. I wish you could have seen her as a glow of feeling gave almost a halo to her sweet face, when she answered my question by saying: 'Yes, Anna, I am changed; but it was only a simple thing that did it. I used to think my mission was to look after everybody and keep them in the right way until one morning about two years ago, no one seeming to need me much, I said to myself, To-day I will look after Betsy Bacon, and keep her from wrong thoughts and actions, and make her do all things right and just. When night came, though I had been very busy, my work was hardly begun; and I am never through it. So, you see, I have no time to correct others.' It seemed," said Anna, "as if dear Aunt Bacon had given me a little sermon; and a queer one, as its text forbade the preacher applying it to her hearer. But I took it home with me, and told it to James; and he and I resolved to make it the rule of our lives and of our children's lives, and you will readily believe it keeps us busy all the time. It surprises me," continued Anna, "to see how quick children are to see a point and make an application. Little Sue, learning her Bible verses the other day, called to me, saying, 'I think my lesson is just the same as taking care of Betsy; for, mamma, it says, "And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?" '" — *Selected from the Boston Evening Transcript.*

NATURAL HISTORY.

GRASSES.

Have you ever tried to see how many different kinds of grasses you could count on your way to and from school? Even if you live in the city, you can find grasses in waste lots and sometimes in private yards. The green leaves of different species look a good deal alike, though in time you may recognize differences in them; and you will see great differences in the flowers. A grass blossom almost always consists of two small green scales of different shapes; one of these often larger than the other, and folded round it. Get an oat from the horses' bin, and see if you can find the two scales wrapped round the grain (these scales are known botanically as palets,— not a difficult name). If you examine the oat blossom while young and fresh, you will find in the centre, instead of the dry, hard grain, a little green body, which bears at its apex two pretty, feathery plumes. These afterward drop off, as the grain ripens. Besides this plumed body, you will find the stamens, generally three in number, each with its slender stalk and yellow or purple anther, full of yellow dust. These hang

out from between the scales and shake in the wind, like the anthers of the white lily. Notice whether you ever find the white plumes and the yellow anthers coming out together from between the same scales at the same time; and, if not, which do you think first peeps out to see the world? The parts that I have been describing form the flower of the grass. In some grasses this flower grows alone at the end of a little stalk; and then it protects itself with another pair of scales or glumes, as they are called. In other grasses the flowers are social, and two or more grow together, with a pair of glumes at the base of the cluster. Sometimes the glumes and sometimes the palets have long bristles or awns on their tip or on their back. What use do you suppose these awns are to the flower? The flowers or clusters may be arranged in all sorts of ways. They may be crowded together, as in the Timothy or Fox-tail grass, or spread out loose, as in the Hair-grass, or all sitting close on one side of the stem, as in the Cord-grass, or on opposite sides, as in the Couch-grass.

Grasses are, on some accounts, easier to become acquainted with than mosses. They are larger, and most of them have common names. Probably you know some of them already. There is the Low Spear-grass, one of the first to blossom in the spring; and the Sweet Vernal-grass, so fragrant in the hay, though not while fresh; and the Fox-tail, Cats'-tail, and Squirrel-tail grasses; and the Bottle-brush-grass, which grows in moist woodlands and whose name sufficiently describes it; and the soft, downy Velvet-grass; and the Beard-grass, which is so pretty in autumnal bouquets; and the Rice Cut-grass, which also blossoms in the fall, in wet places, and is as dangerous to the fingers as a new pen-knife. Indeed, when going to gather it, one should take a case of court-plaster in one's pocket.

Several plants are called grasses which are not grasses at all. Among these are the Blue-eyed grass, Yellow-eyed grass, Peppergrass, Nut-grass, and Cotton-grass. The Nut-grass and Cotton-grass belong to the Sedge family, the members of which you may sometimes mistake for true grasses; but each of their flowers is protected by only one little scale instead of the two of the grasses. C. H. C.

SCHOOL AND AFTER.

I spent four years in the study of history, constructing, while I did so, some tables of royal successions on a plan of my own which enabled me to see at a glance the descent, succession, and date of each reigning sovereign of every country, ancient and modern, possessing any history of which I could find trace. These tables I still have by me, and they certainly testify to considerable industry. Then the parson of our parish, who had been a tutor in Dublin College, came up three times a week, for several years, and taught me a little Greek (enough to read the Gospels and to stumble through Plato's "Krito"), and rather more geometry, to which science I took an immense fancy, and in which he carried me over Euclid and conic sections and through two most delightful books of Archimedes' spherics. I tried algebra, but had as much disinclination for that form of mental labor as I had enjoyment in the reasoning required by geometry. My tutor told me he was able to teach me in one lesson as many propositions as he habitually taught the undergraduates of Dublin College in two. I have ever since strongly recommended this study to women as specially fitted to counteract our habits of hasty judgment and slovenly statement, and to impress upon us the nature of real demonstration.

I also read at this time, by myself, as many of the great books of the world as I could reach, making it a rule always (whether bored or not) to go on to the end of each, and also following generally Gibbon's advice; namely, to rehearse in one's mind in a walk, before beginning a great book, all that one knows of the subject, and then, having finished it, to take another walk, and register how much has been added to our store of ideas. In these ways I read all the "Faery Queen," all Milton's poetry, and the "Divina Commedia" and "Gerusalemme Liberata" in the originals. Also (in translations) I read through the Iliad, Odyssey, Æneid, Pharsalia, and all or nearly all Æschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, Ovid, Tacitus, Xenophon, Herodotus, Thucydides, etc. There was a fairly good library at Newbridge; and I could also go when I pleased and read in Archbishop Marsh's old library, in Dublin, where there were splendid old

books, though none I think more recent than a hundred and fifty years before my time. My mother possessed a small collection of classics,—Dryden, Pope, Milton, Horace, etc.,—which she gave me; and I bought for myself such other books as I needed out of my liberal pin-money. Happily, I had at that time a really good memory for literature, being able to carry away almost the words of passages which much interested me in prose or verse, and to bring them into use when required, though I had, oddly enough, at the same period so imperfect a recollection of persons and daily events that, being anxious to do justice to our servants, I was obliged to keep a memoranda of the character and circumstances of all who left us, that I might give accurate and truthful recommendations.

By degrees these discursive studies,—I took up various hobbies from time to time,—astronomy, architecture, heraldry, and many others, centred more and more on the answers which have been made through the ages by philosophers and prophets to the great questions of the human soul. I read such translations as were accessible in those pre-Müller days, of Eastern Sacred books, Anquetil du Perron's "Zend Avesta" (twice), and Sir William Jones's "Institutes of Menu," and all that I could learn about the Greek and Alexandrian philosophers from Diogenes, Laertius, and the old translators (Taylor of Norwich and others), and a large biographical dictionary which we had in our library. Having always a passion for synopses, I constructed, somewhere about 1840, a table big enough to cover a sheet of double elephant paper, wherein the principal Greek philosophers were ranged — their lives, ethics, cosmogonies, and special doctrines—in separate columns. After this I made a similar table of the early Gnostics and other heresiarchs, with the aid of Mosheim, Sozomen, and Eusebius.

Does the reader smile to find these studies recorded as the principal concern of the life of a young lady from sixteen to twenty, and, in fact, to thirty-five years of age? It was even so! They *were* (besides religion, of which I shall speak elsewhere) my supreme interest. As I have said in the beginning, I had neither cares of love nor cares of money to occupy my mind or my heart. My parents wished me to go a little into society when I was about eighteen; and I was, for the moment, pleased and interested in the few balls and drawing-rooms (in Dublin) to which my father and afterward my uncle, Gen. George Cobbe, conducted me. But I was rather bored than amused by my dancing partners; and my dear mother, already in declining years, and completely an invalid, could never accompany me, and I pined for her motherly presence and guidance, the loss of which was only half compensated for by her comments on the long reports of all I had seen and said and done, as I sat on her bed on my return home. By degrees, also, my thoughts came to be so gravely employed by efforts to find my way to religious truth that the whole glamour of social pleasures disappeared and became a weariness; and, by the time I was nineteen, I begged to be allowed to stay at home and only to receive our own guests, and attend the occasional dinners in our neighborhood. With some regret my parents yielded to the point; and, except for a visit every two or three years to London for a few weeks of sight-seeing, and one or two trips in Ireland to houses of our relations, my life for a long time was perfectly secluded.

In one of our summer excursions I remember my father and one of my brothers and I lionized Winchester, and came upon an exquisite chapel, which was at that time, and perhaps still is, a sort of sanctuary of books, in the midst of a lovely silent cloister. To describe the longing I felt then, and long after, to spend all my life studying there in peace and solitude, "hiving, learning with each studious year," would be impossible!

I think there is a great and, it must be said lamentable, difference between the genuine passion for study such as many men and women in my time and before it experienced, and the hurried anxious *gobbling up* of knowledge which has been introduced by competitive examinations, and the eternal necessity for getting something else besides knowledge,—something to be represented by M.A. or B. Sch., or, perhaps, £ *s. d.*! When I was young, there were no honors or rewards of any kind for a woman's learning; and, as there were no examinations, there was no hurry or anxiety. There was only healthy thirst for knowledge of one kind or another, and of

one kind after another. When I came across a reference to a matter which I did not understand, it was not then necessary, as it seems to be to young students now, to hasten over it, leaving the unknown name, or event, or doctrine, like an enemy's fortress on the road of an advancing army. I stopped and sat down before it, perhaps for days and weeks; but I conquered it at last, and then went on my way strengthened by the victory. Recently I have actually heard of students at a college for ladies being advised by their "coach" to *skip a number of propositions in Euclid*, as it was certain that they would not be examined in them. One might as well help a climber by taking rungs out of his ladder! I can make no sort of pretensions to have acquired, even in my best days, anything like the instruction which the young students of Girton and Newnham and Lady Margaret Hall are so fortunate as to possess, and much I envy their opportunities for obtaining accurate scholarship. But I know not whether the method they follow can, on the whole, convey as much of the pure delight in learning as did my solitary early studies. When the summer morning sun rose over the trees and shone as it often did in my bedroom, finding me still over my books from the evening before, and when I then sauntered out to take a sleep on one of the garden seats in the shrubbery, the sense of having learned something, or cleared up some hitherto doubted point, or added a store of fresh ideas to my mental riches, was one of purest satisfaction.— *F. P. Cobbe.*

AMUSEMENT COLUMN.

[*Please send all material for this department to Miss E. D. Chapman, 34 Buckingham Street, Cambridge, Mass.*]

Charades.

1.

"What is your name, my little maid?"
"My *first* and *second*," she sweetly said;
And in those two words uttered low
She gave my *whole*, as you must know.

2.

My *second* is *first* in the fertile fields
Ripened by rain and sun.
My *whole* is a place where important work
Of a different kind is done.

E. P. P.

Conundrums.

1. If you had to be hung, in what fruit would you prefer to be hung?
2. When is a plant to be dreaded more than a mad dog?
3. To what class of periodicals do soldiers contribute?
4. Who dares to sit before the queen with his hat on?
5. Why is a baker a most improvident man?

Decapitations.

1.

Fill out the spaces in the following verses by a word whose first letter is dropped in each succeeding line. There is a different word for each verse:—

She was a veritable ——.
She loathed December when it's ——
And also hated getting ——.

And oft she'd take great pains to ——
Upon the floor the little ——
Rather than take it when she's ——.

At last she did her ways ——
Her clothes keep clean, her stockings ——
She grew quite pleasant in the ——.

2. Behead an article of wearing apparel and leave a passion.
3. Behead what is often found in the mountains, and leave a bird.
4. Behead an animal and leave an animal.

Answers to Puzzles in March Number.

Riddle.

The word described is a *Book*. The anagrams in the poem are contraction, tatters, always, white, form, thick, thin, flesh, covered, skin, points, compass, stops, without, speaking, English, German, fondly, sometimes, ages, monarch, pages.

Conundrums.

1. Because he saw a heavy swell pitching into a little cove on the beach.
2. When it becomes a lady.
3. No, they do write.
4. He casts reflections.
5. It is a cat erect.

Enigma.

"Under the snow lie sweet things out of sight."

Charade.

Tomato.

THE CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE.

OBJECTS.

1. To cheer and comfort the lonely and discouraged — not only invalids, but all who need cheer and comfort — by the interchange of letters and by gifts of books and periodicals.

2. To supply in some measure to young people in remote places the lack of schools, by gifts of school-books, letters, and, for those who desire it, correspondence classes on history, the natural sciences, and other interesting branches of study. If any desire to join such classes, they may send their names to our secretary.

3. Also to supply, to some extent, the lack of a church. One good sermon or sermon extract is printed in each number of the paper. These sermons are never doctrinal, but practical, and intended to cheer and comfort the sorrowful and aid in giving a vital religion without regard to sect or creed.

4. An important part of our mission is to mothers of young families, who feel the importance of their sacred charge and are anxious to learn all that can be known to make of their children good, upright, useful men and women,— good citizens of the country, for which we must all work together if we would make it fulfil its mission among the nations of the world and to the races of mankind. We give books on subjects connected with the training of children, and our columns are open (in our "Mothers' Council") to all who have questions to ask or interesting suggestions to make on topics important to mothers.

WILL ANY MINISTER WHO RECEIVES THIS PAPER KINDLY NOTICE THAT IT IS NOT SENT TO HIM WITH THE OBJECT OF OBTAINING SUBSCRIPTIONS, BUT THAT, IF HE KNOWS OF LONELY PEOPLE LIVING IN REMOTE PLACES ON RANCHES AND PRAIRIES, — ESPECIALLY WHERE THERE ARE FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN,— IT WILL ASSIST THEM AND BE A FAVOR TO US TO SEND THEIR NAMES TO OUR SECRETARY, THAT THEY MAY RECEIVE OUR PAPER FREE AND ENJOY THE ADVANTAGES OF THE OFFERS OF BOOKS, ETC., WHICH ARE PRINTED IN EVERY NUMBER?

IMPORTANT NOTICES.

There will be no meeting of the Cheerful Letter Exchange until further notice.

The address of Mrs. Cora A. Hoskinson is changed from Sturgis, Michigan, to Nottawa, Michigan.

The address of Mrs. Sarah Gilbert is changed from Richfield, Nebraska, to Mt. Vernon, South Dakota.

In sending requests or offers of books, it is essential to address these communications to the *Book Club* (secretary, Mrs. W. B. Nichols). If addressed to the Editor, these letters are in some cases postponed, in others altogether omitted. See directions in every number of *The Cheerful Letter*.

It is contrary to the rules of the Cheerful Letter Exchange to allow any one to make use of our paper by addressing letters, asking for money, clothing, or other articles, to those whose names are printed in the paper. This prohibition includes requests to borrow money and the offering of articles for sale. The name of any person who infringes this rule will be dropped from our list; and any one who receives a request of this description is desired by our Executive Committee to return no answer, but to enclose the letter at once to our secretary, Miss Langmaid.

DIRECTIONS.

EDITOR,—Miss L. Freeman Clarke, 91 Mt. Vernon Street, Boston, Mass.

SECRETARY OF CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE,—Miss Bertha Langmaid, 2 Gordon Terrace, Brookline, Mass.

SECRETARY OF BOOK CLUB OF CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE,—Mrs. W. B. Nichols, 2 Kensington Park, Roxbury, Mass.

TREASURER OF CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE,—Miss Louise Howe, 53 Linden Street, Brookline, or 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass.

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Those not able to subscribe for the paper, but desiring to receive it, may do so by writing to Miss Louise Howe, as above. Please give full name and address. Also send name of minister as reference. Some of our members take the paper in order to send it to those who are not able to subscribe for it.